

Administrative Division Review Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) To provide a basis for formal quality and strategic review of the University's Administrative Divisions. The review will provide an evidence-based assessment of the performance of a Division and its contributions to the strategic objectives of the University. Reviews also consider the effectiveness of the internal management and operations of the Division.

Preamble

(2) Reviews of Divisions will normally be conducted on a five year cyclic basis. The review will provide a basis for quality assurance of a Division in relation to its activities, organisation and management and the resourcing of these to ensure alignment with the University's Strategic Plan.

(3) A calendar of planned reviews will be published, and may be varied at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor. An out of cycle review may be commissioned at the Vice-Chancellor's discretion or upon the advice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or Vice-President (Administration).

General

(4) Provision for formal reviews of Administrative Divisions is an important element of the University's planning and quality assurance framework. Generic terms of reference are provided, which are customised, as required, by the Vice-Chancellor.

Section 2 - Scope

(5) Applies to all Administrative Divisions are covered by this Policy.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(6) Reviews of Divisions will normally be conducted on a five year cyclic basis. A calendar of planned reviews will be published, and may be varied at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor.

(7) Timing of reviews will take account, to the extent possible, of planned in-depth UniForum Project Study Topics and other external reviews.

(8) An out of cycle review may be commissioned at the Vice-Chancellor's discretion or upon the advice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or Vice-President (Administration).

(9) A Review of a Division will:

- a. critically evaluate the current performance of the Division, including an assessment of performance over time

- and relative to appropriate benchmarks from the higher education sector or other sectors;
- b. assess the extent to which Division's activities support the objectives of the University's [Strategic Plan](#) and related plans;
- c. consider the efficiency and effectiveness of allocated resource utilisation;
- d. identify actions to improve performance;
- e. provide advice on the future direction of the Division, including staffing profile and noting developments within the University, the higher education sector, relevant wider industries/professions and the community.

Section 4 - Procedure

Part A - Purpose of Review

(10) A Review of a Division will:

- a. critically evaluate the current performance of the Division, including an assessment of performance over time and relative to appropriate benchmarks from the higher education sector or other sectors;
- b. assess the extent to which Division's activities support the objectives of the University's [Strategic Plan](#) and related plans;
- c. consider the efficiency and effectiveness of allocated resource utilisation;
- d. identify actions to improve performance;
- e. provide advice on the future direction of the Division, including staffing profile and noting developments within the University, the higher education sector, relevant industries, professions and the community.

Part B - Timing of Reviews

(11) Reviews of Divisions will normally be conducted on a five year cyclic basis. A calendar of planned reviews will be published, and may be varied at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor.

(12) Timing of reviews will take account, to the extent possible, of planned in-depth UniForum Project Study Topics, and other similar external reviews.

Part C - Commissioning the Review

(13) A review is formally commissioned by the Vice-Chancellor.

(14) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), supported by the Planning and Institutional Performance Unit, will make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor with respect to review timing, terms of reference and panel membership.

(15) The Vice-Chancellor will inform the Senior Executive Group, the Academic Board and the University Council when a review has been commissioned.

(16) The Vice-Chancellor will issue formal invitations to Panel members, and approve any customisation of the Generic Terms of Reference.

Part D - Review Costs

(17) Costs associated with the review, including the travel and accommodation costs of the review panel, will be borne by the Division under review.

Part E - Composition of the Review Panel

(18) Each Review Panel will include suitably qualified and experienced people who can comment authoritatively on the professional services under review. Panel members may be drawn from another Australian university, from sectors other than higher education and from business/industry taking account of commercial in confidence considerations. Panel members will be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement. Each review Panel will be supported by an Executive Officer nominated by the Executive Director, Planning and Governance.

Part F - Formal Appointment of the Review Panel

(19) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will provide recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor regarding an appropriate Chair and membership for each Panel.

(20) The relevant senior executive report (DVC/VP/Chief of Staff) and the Director of the area under review will be invited to comment to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), in confidence, on a proposed short-list of potential panel members to identify any potential conflicts of interest.

(21) The Planning and Institutional Performance Unit will provide support for this process.

Part G - Role of the Director of the Division

(22) The Director of the Division has overall responsibility for the preparation of the self-review document. The Division will receive support from the Planning and Institutional Performance Unit in the provision of data to underpin the Division's analysis.

(23) The self-review document will be submitted to the Review Panel via the Executive Officer at least six weeks before the panel's site visit.

(24) The Executive Officer will ensure the self-review document is made available to La Trobe staff via the University intranet, and made available on request to relevant external stakeholders.

(25) The Director of the Division will meet with the review panel during the site visit.

(26) The Director of the Division will nominate an administrative officer who will be allocated to support the logistics for the review.

Part H - Role of the relevant DVC/VP/Chief of Staff

(27) The appropriate senior executive report (DVCA/VP(Admin)/Chief of Staff) will be invited to provide comment to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on possible panel members.

(28) The appropriate senior executive report (DVCA/VP(Admin)/Chief of Staff) will approve the self-review document prepared by the Division prior to its submission, and will meet with the review panel during the site visit.

(29) The relevant senior executive will approve the draft plan prepared by the Director prior to its submission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

(30) The relevant senior executive plays a key role in supporting the Director in the implementation of the agreed Action Plan.

Part I - Role of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

(31) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) plays a key role in overseeing the review process, including:

- a. advising the Vice-Chancellor on the scheduling and commissioning of reviews and the appointment of review panels;
- b. ensuring that review panels are appropriately briefed on the nature and intended outcomes of the review processes and on the La Trobe operating context;
- c. approving the self-review document prior to its submission to the review panel;
- d. approving the panel's site visit schedule; meeting with the review panel;
- e. receiving the draft written panel report and working with the review panel, Director, relevant senior executive and other staff as necessary in finalising the report;
- f. overseeing the progress of action planning and implementation.

(32) Where the Division under review is within the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)'s portfolio, the Vice-Chancellor nominates another executive level staff member to perform these roles.

Part J - Role of the Divisional Administration Officer

(33) The nominated Divisional Administration Officer will work with the panel Executive Officer to make detailed arrangements for the smooth-running of the panel site visit, including calendar invitations, room bookings and catering.

Part K - Role of the Review Panel

(34) The Review Panel will:

- a. consider the self-review portfolio prepared by the Division;
- b. liaise and or meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) throughout the review process to discuss/seek any required additional guidance;
- c. consider any additional information it may wish to request of the Division;
- d. issue a general invitation to the University community to make written submissions to the panel;
- e. where appropriate, invite submissions from particular members of the University community and from external groups and individuals;
- f. convene for up to three days to conduct interviews with key stakeholders including University management and Division staff and review relevant documentation; draft recommendations on the final day of the visit;
- g. meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Vice-President (Administration) and the Vice-Chancellor at the conclusion of the visit to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations; and
- h. with the assistance of the Executive Officer, prepare and submit a final written report to the Vice-Chancellor within six weeks of the site visit. The review report will be prepared in accordance with the specifications in the Reviews Handbook; and
- i. with the assistance of the Executive Officer, prepare and submit a final written feedback report to the Division Head.

Part L - Role of the Executive Officer, Planning and Governance

(35) Planning and Governance will appoint an appropriately qualified person to act as Executive Officer to the review panel. This person may be a Planning Unit staff member, or drawn from another area within La Trobe. The Executive Officer to the panel will provide professional advice and administrative support to the panel.

(36) The Executive Officer will:

- a. support the panel in the development of an appropriate site visit schedule and liaise with the Division in practical arrangements for interviews;
- b. book the travel and accommodation for panel members;
- c. ensure the self-review document is made available to La Trobe staff via the University intranet, and made available on request to relevant external stakeholders;
- d. coordinate the provision of information and answers to questions that the panel may have prior to the site visit;
- e. participate in the site visit, taking notes of interviews and supporting the panel's work; and
- f. draft the review report, taking account of panel member's feedback

(37) The role of the Executive Officer is fully specified in the Reviews Handbook.

Part M - Role of the Planning Unit

(38) The Division will receive support from the Planning Unit (Planning and Governance) in the provision of data to underpin the self-review portfolio, including comparative data where available.

(39) The Planning Unit can also assist by providing advice on drafts of the self-review document.

Part N - Self-Review Process and Self-Review Document

(40) The self-review process provides an opportunity for critical self-assessment by the Division, and should identify areas of achievement and success, as well as opportunities for improvement. Self-assessment focuses on both current and future performance, and includes a critical examination of how the Division can contribute most effectively to the University's strategic objectives. The Division being reviewed will prepare a self-review document to summarise its performance in relation to the review's Terms of Reference, drawing on appropriate comparative data.

(41) The self-review document will:

- a. address the Terms of Reference;
- b. compare the Division's performance in key areas (with evidence), in line with the Terms of Reference, against relevant comparators in the higher education sector and other sectors, as appropriate; and
- c. focus on future performance through an analysis of the Division's areas of strength and those requiring development.

(42) The self-review document will be no longer than 20 A4 pages, excluding appendices, and must address the Terms of Reference for the review.

(43) The self-review document allows the Division to reflect upon and analyse operations in order to optimise future performance. Consequently, the focus of the submission is to identify future directions and strategic intentions for the Division. However, to set the context for the review, it is important to briefly address the Division's history and its present circumstances with a focus on factors that have contributed to the current operating environment and potential future outlook of the Division.

(44) The self-review document should include:

- a. an Executive Summary of the submission;
- b. the history of the Division;
- c. the present circumstances of the Division;
- d. the future plans of the Division for improvement and development;
- e. appendices (including the Division's Business Plan, budget, and supporting evidence).

A: The History of the Division

(45) The section includes reference to:

- a. the origins and histories of the groups/sections of the Division and the history of its organisational relationships (i.e. the precursors to the current Division);
- b. amalgamations of groups/sections;
- c. management structures and leadership positions established and the rationale for their creation;
- d. major outcomes of the previous review (where applicable) and summary of any factors which might have had an impact since the previous review (e.g. reorganisations/structural change, changes in funding formula, changes in stakeholder/user perceptions); and
- e. any other significant changes since the previous review.

B: The Division at Present

(46) This section includes a comprehensive analysis of the Division's current service offerings, operations and performance levels. An overview of the Division's goals and priorities should be provided with an analysis of the extent to which these goals and priorities are being achieved. The self-review should identify the key services provided by the Division and for each key service, assess:

- a. the key stakeholders for the service;
- b. main activities undertaken;
- c. key performance measures; efficiency and effectiveness in allocated resource utilisation;
- d. effectiveness of internal, advisory and supervisory organisational structures.

(47) There are two types of data required: (i) Division-specific data or documentation; and (ii) external comparative/benchmark data from higher education and elsewhere. Time series data for the past five years should be provided as the default.

Division-Specific Data and Documentation

(48) Submissions include an assessment of performance according to the areas covered by the generic terms of reference. The self-review should include quantitative and qualitative data for the past 5 years (where possible). Where quantitative data are available, comparable data for other relevant units within and external to the University should be supplied.

(49) Data requirements include:

- a. current Business Plan current year budget and profit-loss statement;
- b. summary of budget and actual financial performance;
- c. organisational chart showing position HEO levels and FTE;
- d. staff demographic data showing age, gender and length of service;
- e. staff qualifications and skill-base;
- f. staff professional development/training/career development plans;
- g. staff succession plan (where available);
- h. most recent Business Plan and Performance Review report;
- i. most recent Staff Climate Survey data;
- j. asset register including major equipment and IT infrastructure;
- k. space report showing floor area, space utilisation and space quality;
- l. relevant data from the UniForum Project.

External Comparative Data

(50) The Division should present relevant comparative data, including at least two IRU member universities. Other relevant university or non-higher education sector external comparators may be used. Relevant data from the UniForum Project must be used.

C: The Division in the Future

(51) This section should be the focus of the submission.

- a. Identify factors that will influence the future directions of the Division and how the Division is currently contributing to that direction and/or realigning its activities in keeping with developments.
- b. Describe plans and strategies for the future development and improvement of the Division over the next five years. It is expected that the Division will submit its current Business Plan.
- c. Areas of potential growth. The future plans of the Division include Division-specific strategic priorities. Some of these areas might arise from the benchmarking exercise or involve predictions of future directions in the Division's activities.

Part O - Additional Documents

(52) Refer to the:

- a. Administrative Division: Review: Generic Terms of Reference
- b. Reviews Handbook

Part P - Publication of Written Submissions to the Review

(53) With the exception of submissions clearly marked 'CONFIDENTIAL', submissions to the review panel will be made available on the University intranet, accessible to staff of the University. Submissions will be made available to the review panel at least one week before the site visit.

Part Q - Arrangements for Site Visit Schedule

(54) The panel's site visit schedule is prepared by Planning and Governance, with input from the School under review and the review panel members. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) approves the final site visit schedule.

(55) The site visit schedule, room bookings and invitations to interviewees will be coordinated by the allocated Divisional Administration Officer and the panel Executive Officer.

Part R - Report of the Panel

(56) The review report will be prepared in accordance with the Review Handbook.

(57) Within six weeks of the site visit a draft report will be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). He/she will request the Divisional Director to check the report for matters of fact as well as circulate the draft to other staff at her/his discretion, for comment. The report will then be returned to the Panel for consideration of comments and final sign-off by the Panel Chair.

(58) The Panel will submit the final report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who will receive the report and make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor.

(59) The Vice-Chancellor will provide Divisional Director with a copy of the Panel's report and invite the preparation of

an Action Plan, using the approved pro-forma. The Action Plan will be expected within one month of the Vice-Chancellor's invitation to the Director. The draft Action Plan will first be submitted by the Divisional Director to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for consideration. The final version of the Action Plan will be submitted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.

Part S - Scope of the Review Report

(60) The Review Report is intended to be primarily focussed on the activities of the Division. During the process the Panel may identify issues outside the Division that impact on its capacity to fulfil its mission. These issues should be identified in a discrete section of the report, but without specific recommendations related to wider organisational matters, other than the suggestion that these matters might be reviewed in the wider organisational context. At the time of preparing the Action Plan the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will seek input from the University officer with accountability for that area to determine the action that needs to be taken and these details will be included in the Action Plan.

Part T - Distribution of the Panel Report

(61) The Director of the area under review will make the report available to members of the Division and is expected to consult with Division staff as appropriate in the development of an Action Plan.

Part U - Division Response to the Report - Action Plan

(62) The Action Plan will respond directly to the recommendations made by the Panel, and will be prepared in accordance with the format provided by Planning and Governance.

(63) Where these relate to matters outside the Division, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor will seek input from the University officer with accountability for that area and include the University actions in the draft Action Plan submitted by the Divisional Director.

(64) The Action Plan will be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) within one month of the invitation to the Divisional Director. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will provide initial feedback on the draft Action Plan and will submit the final Action Plan to the Vice-Chancellor for formal approval.

Part V - Reporting on Review Outcomes

(65) The Action Plan and the Panel's Review Report will be presented to Senior Executive Group for noting.

(66) The Vice-Chancellor will advise Council and Academic Board of the review findings and recommendations, and of implementation of the Action Plan.

Part W - Implementation of Action Plans

(67) Items in the Action Plan will be incorporated into the Division Business Plan. Reporting on the Action Plan will be integrated into the Division's annual reporting against Business Plan objectives.

Part X - Progress Reports

(68) The Division will provide the Vice-Chancellor with a consolidated report of progress against each relevant review recommendation at 12 months and 18 months and each following 12 months until such time as the Division is due for another cyclical review.

(69) The 12 and 18 monthly Progress Reports will be provided to Senior Executive Group; and a summary report

provided to Academic Board and Council for noting via the Vice-Chancellor. This process will be facilitated by Planning and Governance.

Part Y - Records Management

(70) All confidential submissions, drafts of the review report, and notes taken during the review, will be returned by panel members to the secretariat upon completion of the review for confidential disposal.

(71) Records and Archives Services will retain a copy of the Panel report and associated documentation and submissions.

(72) An Executive Summary of the Panel's report, together with the Panel's recommendations, will be posted on the University intranet.

Section 5 - Definitions

(73) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Action Plan: Usually in tabular form, details planned responses to recommendations, responsible persons and timelines for action.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Vice-Chancellor; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); Vice-President (Administration); Executive Directors; Executive Director, Planning and Governance.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); Vice-President (Administration); Academic Board; and University Council.

Status and Details

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